

Trees on Maine Street

∞ The Project Canopy Bulletin ∞

Mar-Apr 2016



Advice on Pruning Urban Apple Trees for Wildlife

On a cold and rainy Saturday, the Upper Kennebec Valley chapter of the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine was fortunate to have Joe Dembeck; a self-proclaimed “Apple Tree Enthusiast” as well as the Executive Director of the Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District give great talk and demonstration on pruning apple trees for wildlife. Whether you have an overtopped apple tree in your back yard or on the back 40, his information was very interesting.

There are still questions as to the origin of apple trees. Some theorize they are the result of cross-pollination of ancient plum and meadowsweet, perhaps originating in Kazakhstan then eventually brought to North America by missionaries and colonists. Early settlers mostly used the apples for cider. There are only 4 species of native apples to North America, all of them crabapples. To wildlife, all that makes no difference, the birds and critters just like apples and have always contributed to spreading the seeds.

The apple trees Joe talked about are the “wild” kind: trees from abandoned orchards or farms, or those whose seeds were deposited by birds etc. and the forest grew up around them. When looking at trees for wildlife value, first assess the existing and surviving ones. Which ones are doing the best under the conditions they have? The basics are that you want to get direct sunlight to them and prune them to ensure consistent fruiting and tree health. Your next plan of action is this:

1. Clear to the drip line
2. Give them room to grow
3. Increase their sun exposure
4. Pruning: priority is clearing out the dead wood, shaping and health (year 1) and production (year 2).

The process is what is important. When clearing to the drip line, just assess what is shading the tree, especially on the south side, and remove that vegetation. If the tree is completely overtopped, you might want to remove the competition in stages so as not to shock the tree. Be careful of vines and don't just yank them out; you might end up ripping some of the crown. For pruning in year 1, start with the dead limbs then work your way to the live ones. When pruning that first time, you are trying to reshape and balance the tree, and only a 30% removal of living wood is recommended per year. Think of the weight distribution and the weight of the limbs with apples. You don't want to prune so much on one side that you put the tree at risk of its limbs or the whole tree toppling due to weight. The 30% includes “waterspouts” which are basically young suckers growing straight up off the limbs.

For the 2nd year of pruning, some common old terms are “if you can throw a cat through it,” or “it is open enough for birds to fly through in all directions” you have done a good job! The best time to prune is while the trees are dormant.—late winter. “You should be done by the end of March and definitely before the buds start to swell for spring” says Joe. Starting too early in the winter can cause too much exposure and moisture loss which will result in checking or cracking in the limbs. Painting the wounds is not recommended anymore. Sealing the cuts prevents the natural exchange of moisture in the healing process for the tree, “let the tree heal itself”.

When it comes to equipment to use, you want to use good quality tools and make clean cuts. Do as much as possible with hand tools. It mostly comes down to budget, but there are some really good pruning saws and hand pruners. Doing some research and asking questions where you can buy them goes a long way. For cleaning the tools, Joe recommends margarine! He uses it to clean the pitch off his hands and the tools. Good care of your tools—and your trees—will be an investment for many years to come.—Provided by District Forester, Patty Cormier

PROJECT CANOPY

assists communities and nonprofit, grassroots organizations in building self-sustaining urban and community forestry programs with strong local support.

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"But each spring a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground."
- Lewis Gantt

News and Updates

Invasive Forest Pest Workshops in March and April

Invasive Forest Pest Workshops are being offered by Maine Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) through a grant from Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Workshops will be offered in spring and summer 2016 in York, Cumberland, Oxford, Somerset, Franklin, Androscoggin-Sagadahoc, Kennebec, Knox-Lincoln, Waldo and Hancock counties. Workshops will be posted on the MACD website as they are scheduled: maineconservationdistricts.com/forest-pest-outreach.

These workshops will help landowners and users, landscape and forest professionals, and all residents of the state to identify current and potential invasive forest pests and their host species, to understand the threats to our forests and woodlands posed by these pests, and learn how to report suspected pest sightings or damage to trees that may be a result of pest infestations.

All participants will receive an information packet with fact sheets about the major pest species, a list of host trees that the species may be found on, and other relevant information. When possible, workshops will also include an optional outdoor visit to a site where invasive pests or host trees may be found.

All workshops are free (except those that may be part of a larger event that has an admission fee).

March 17, 2016 (Thu) at 7pm at Oxford Comprehensive School on Main St, South Paris. Presenter: Jean Federico, Oxford SWCD. FMI and to register: Oxford SWCD, 743-5789 or oxfordcountyswcd@gmail.com

March 23, 2016 (Wed) from 9-11am at Wilton Town Office, 158 Weld Rd. Presenter: Joe Dembeck, Somerset SWCD. FMI and to register: 772-4279 or rosetta.thompson@franklinswcd.org

April 2, 2016 (Sat) at Rural Living Day in Thorndike. Presenter: Mary Thompson, Knox-Lincoln SWCD

FMI and to register: This workshop is part of Rural Living Day, a day-long event sponsored by Waldo County Extension. Ticket information and the schedule of events and programs will be posted at maineconservationdistricts.com/forest-pest-outreach/ as it is available. For general info about forest pest presentations in Waldo County: 338-1964 x4 or kym.sanderson@me.nacdnet.net.

April 6, 2016 (Wed) from 10am-noon at Midcoast Conservancy, 36 Water St, Wiscasset. Optional site visit to Cushman Mountain from 12:30-1:30pm. Presenter: Mary Thompson, Knox-Lincoln SWCD. FMI and to register: Knox-Lincoln SWCD, 596-2040 or info@knox-lincoln.org.

April 19, 2016 (Tue) from 9-11am at Searsmont Town Office, 37 Main St. South. Presenter: Mary Thompson, Knox-Lincoln SWCD. FMI and to register: Waldo SWCD, 338-1964 x4 or kym.sanderson@me.nacdnet.net

These programs have been reviewed and are approved for the following recertification credits:

- Professional CFE credits by the Society of American Foresters. Category 1-CF: 2.0; (April 6 only: Category 1-CF: 3.0 if participating in optional 1 hour field session)

- Pesticide Applicator credits by the Board of Pesticides Control: 2.0

Credits Pending: State of Maine Board of Licensure of Foresters, Maine Certified Logging Professionals Program, Northeast Master Logger Certification Program (Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands)

Scammers Target Tree Service

As published in the [Feb 2016 issue of Tree Care Industry magazine](#), beware of potential customers that ask you for a quote on tree removal, yet can't be there to meet you due to recent hospitalization or other odd excuses. Just like the emails from "a Nigerian Prince", these scammers want to pay you upfront, for an amount over and above your quote, then have you send the excess money to a third party. The article suggests you make sure to confirm the landowner's name matches that of the customer, that you speak directly to any resident living on the property to confirm, and simply be hyper-vigilant of any request where you can't meet the customer in person.

"The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another. The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month."
- Henry Van Dyke, *Fisherman's Luck*

Beyond the Field Edge: Maine's Most Perennial Crop – Trees

Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District, supported by a grant from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and in cooperation with Aldemere Farm, is offering a series of workshops in March, April, and July for farmers - aspiring, beginning, and those who may be transitioning to new products or practices.

On Fri, Apr 15, 2016, we present "Beyond the Field Edge: Maine's Most Perennial Crop – Trees!" from 8am-3pm at Evening Star Grange, 31 Old Union Rd in Washington. From 8:30-11:30, we will examine how knowledge of soil characteristics can help guide where to farm and where to grow trees; discuss what's good to know about the woods on your farm; learn where to find more information; and find out how to get help with implementing conservation practices. After lunch (11:30-12:30), we'll visit Eli Berry's family woodland, which is managed using low impact practices and incorporates some innovative ways to increase production in the woods. Weather permitting, we will examine the soils on this property and discuss its properties.

*Morning refreshments and lunch provided.

**Dress appropriately for the field portion. We will carpool from grange to field site (3 mi).

Presenters:

Maine Forest Service:

Andy Shultz, Landowner Outreach Forester

Morten Moesswilde, District Forester

Dept. of Agriculture, Forestry & Conservation:

Steph Gilbert, Farmland Specialist

Dave Rocque, State Soil Scientist

Natural Resources Conservation Service: Brittany Hummel, Soil Conservationist, Knox & Waldo counties

Barrie Brusilla, Consulting Forester, Mid-Maine Forestry

Eli Berry, Low impact logger/Family woodland owner

Did you know you can always find the Forest & Shade Tree - Insect & Disease Conditions for Maine online?

Visit http://maine.gov/dacf/mfs/publications/condition_reports.html

In addition to NRCS and Aldemere Farm, this workshop is presented in cooperation with Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA, Maine Dept of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), and co-sponsored by Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine (SWOAM).

For information about the other workshops in this series, contact Knox-Lincoln SWCD: 596-2040, hildy@knox-lincoln.org, or www.knox-lincoln.org/beginning-farmer-2016.



Cherry Blossoms Expected to Hit Peak Bloom March 31
Washington's crop of Japanese cherry trees will hit their peak bloom between March 31 and April 3, the National Park Service announced Wednesday. The bloom will come 11 days into the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival, which runs from March 20 to April 17.

Last year's peak bloom started April 11. Historically, the cherry trees' peak-bloom phase has landed between March 15 and April 18, with an average start date of April 4, according to National Park Service records. But unseasonably warm weather in winter can push peak bloom earlier.

- <http://www.washingtonian.com/2016/03/02/cherry-blossoms-expected-to-hit-peak-bloom-march-31/>

"Science has never drummed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day."
- W. Earl Hall

Find us on the web at projectcanopy.me, on Facebook at [facebook.com/ProjectCanopy](https://www.facebook.com/ProjectCanopy) or on twitter [@ProjectCanopy](https://twitter.com/ProjectCanopy)

"Spring is sooner recognized by plants than by men."
- Chinese Proverb

Community Wrap-up

Natural Resource Assessment to Benefit People in Every County

We wish to encourage farmers, woodland owners, resource professionals, and members of the general public to take advantage of this opportunity to make your voice heard by completing the survey we have posted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JQ5GPL5>. Or you may stop by the Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District's Office at 107 Park St in Farmington to pick up a printed copy of the survey.

The Maine Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), in cooperation with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is conducting a Natural Resources Assessment (NRA) across the state and needs the help of Maine's citizens! The goal is to determine natural resource priorities so that Districts and NRCS can assist landowners, professionals, and municipalities with best management practices that protect and improve land and water resources. To gather this information, Districts are distributing a statewide survey and holding local meetings to document natural resource conservation concerns and to build on the data collected in the first assessment, completed in 2011. The priorities articulated in the survey and meetings will inform state and local natural resource programs and funding opportunities in the coming five year cycle.

According to Rosetta White, Executive Director of Franklin County SWCD and Amanda Burton, NRCS District Conservationist, "The Natural Resources Assessment process is a great opportunity for people who may or may not own land, and may or may not be associated with a conservation organization to express their conservation priorities by completing a survey or participating in a free-wheeling discussion at a locally held meeting. The results of this process stand to have a broad reach. The Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, DEP, and state legislators are already anxious to see the survey results."

This year's survey will be distributed by all 16 conservation districts and will address statewide conservation concerns as well as give us the chance to drill down to local issues and priorities. We are asking that all citizens make their voices heard by participating in the assessment, whether by completing a survey or attending a local meeting on Tues., March 22nd, 6-8 p.m. at UMF's North Dining Hall B. Preliminary survey results will be available at this time.

To encourage participation, everyone who completes a survey or attends the meeting on March 22nd will go into a drawing for a prize. If you have questions e mail info@franklincswcd.org or call 778-4279.

For more information about the Natural Resources Assessment or to access the online survey please visit the Maine Association of Conservation Districts website at maineconservationdistricts.com.

USDA-NRCS and Maine Association of Conservation Districts are equal opportunity providers and employers



March

10 Fall River Urban Forestry Workshop, Fall River, MA
20 MOFGA Seed Swap and Scion Exchange, Unity
24 Maintenance and Preservation of Mature Trees, Dartmouth College
27 Maine Maple Sunday
31 Forestry Night, Houlton Winter Agriculture School, dan.jacobs@maine.gov

April

1-3 ISA International Tree Climbing Competition, Austin, TX
2 Rural Living Day, Thorndike
9 Managing a Small Parcel for Wood and Wildlife - Temple 492-2238, or patty.cormier@maine.gov
22-23 Maine Land Trust Conference, Topsham <http://www.mltm.org/meetings/conservation-conference.php>

May

6-7 FEDCO Tree Sale, 213 Hinckley Rd., Clinton
17 Arbor Day Celebration, Orono. jan.santerre@maine.gov

"One attraction in coming to the woods to live was that I should have leisure and opportunity to see the spring come in."
- Henry David Thoreau

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Maine Forest Service

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